



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

## Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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April, 2005

Editor, Theresa Graham

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### What in the World is TOS Doing with My Dues?

Mac McWhirter, Treasurer

**“What can we tell chapter members that we get for our dues paid to the state level of the Tennessee Ornithological Society?”** This excellent question was posed by a long-standing member at the recent Finance Committee meeting in Dayton and it is one that deserves a detailed and thoughtful answer. The question also alerted me to the fact that all TOS members would appreciate more financial transparency, so here goes!

Trying to avoid being too philosophical about it, I would first answer that we have all found that we can do more collectively as a group than as individuals when we join together in organizations matching common concerns and ideals. Our chapters allow us to achieve this on a local and regional level while TOS allows the various chapters to deal in aggregate with statewide data collection, publications, and pressing conservation matters. I think the charter members of TOS were far-sighted in the development of this two-tier structure.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed with raw, lifeless numbers, and if you attend the Spring meeting I promise you will see more than enough of those in my presentation of membership data and the financial statements. So I don't want to bore you with a bunch of unrelated totals now. I thought that it might be good to look in a more personal way at how our individual dues are spent.

Here is an idea of where the resources were used in 2004 –

**Last year, the TOS state organization spent a total of \$24.70 per membership.**

Printing and mailing five issues of the *Migrant* to each mailbox cost \$12.80 (\$2.56 per issue), continuing the excellent scientific journal of field observation done by our members. It is my understanding that our *Migrant* is now the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest publication of its kind in the country and continues to be utilized by the ornithological community both nationally and internationally.

We expended \$5.55 per membership on Conservation and Research matters, from assisting in the Radnor Lake acquisition of development-threatened land to awarding three competitive field research grants. Memberships to related conservation organizations cost an additional 32 cents per membership.

The *Tennessee Warbler* kept us all up to date on current happenings three times last year for \$4.90 (\$1.63 per mailing), while the TOS website keeps our worldwide presence on the internet for fifty cents per member. Finally, the administrative and meeting expenses for the organization ran 64 cents a membership.

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The dues for the Tennessee Ornithological Society have not been revised since 1988, a period of 17 years. The Society has been fortunate to have been able to accumulate an endowment reserve, primarily from past Life Memberships, thus providing a buffer against inflation over nearly two decades. Even with the use of earnings generated by this endowment, the costs of the organization's publications and programs currently exceed revenues. This makes a dues increase timely and will allow TOS to maintain financial strength over the coming years. The Finance Committee has reviewed this situation closely along with each aspect of annual costs and feels a moderate increase in the dues structure is needed and therefore recommends adoption of the following amendment to the Bylaws:

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE  
BYLAWS OF THE TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Effective January 1, 2006, the annual dues to be paid to the Tennessee Ornithological Society by each member shall be as follows:

- An Active Member shall pay annual dues to the Society of \$18.00 and shall receive one copy of each issue of *THE MIGRANT* and *THE TENNESSEE WARBLER*
- A Family Membership shall pay annual dues to the Society of \$22.00 and shall receive one copy of each issue of *THE MIGRANT* and *THE TENNESSEE WARBLER*
- A Sustaining Member shall pay annual dues to the Society of \$30.00, with member/members entitled to the same benefits and voting rights as an Active or Family Membership.
- A Student Member shall pay annual dues to the Society of \$5.00.
- U. S. Libraries and similar institutional subscribers shall pay \$25.00 per year. Non-U.S. Libraries and similar foreign institutions shall pay \$35.00 per year.
- Honorary Members shall not be liable for dues.

Effective May 1, 2005, the annual amount paid to become a Life Member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society shall be as follows:

A member may become a Life Member by a single payment of \$450.00 to the Society's endowment fund or by four consecutive annual payments of \$112.50 each. Life Memberships are not available to libraries or other institutions. Life Memberships are non-transferable. A spouse of a current Life Member is not covered by the Life Membership and shall pay annual dues to the Society of \$4.00 to be included as a member of the Society.

**All other provisions of the Bylaws remain unchanged and in force.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Ron Hoff, Chair  
Tennessee Ornithological Society Finance Committee

Other Finance Committee members:  
Mac McWhirter – TOS Treasurer  
Virginia Reynolds – TOS President  
Danny Gaddy – TOS President-elect  
David Trently – past TOS Treasurer  
George Payne – past TOS Treasurer



**TOS SPRING MEETING  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE  
APRIL 29, 30 & MAY 1, 2005**

The Memphis Chapter extends its invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the TOS Spring Meeting, to be held April 29, 30 and May 1, 2005. Not only will we be celebrating 75 years of the Memphis Chapter, but also 90 years of the Tennessee Ornithological Society.

**\*\*NOTICE: CHANGE OF NAME (but not location) OF MOTEL \*\***

The Holiday Inn at the Sycamore View exit is now the Memphis Plaza Hotel Suites. The new hotel will remain the headquarters for our meeting. To get to the hotel, exit I-40 at Sycamore View (Exit #12, the last exit before I-40 runs into the I-240 loop around Memphis). Take a right at the exit (go north). Then turn right (east) at the first traffic light, onto Shelby Oaks Drive. In about a half-mile, the Memphis Plaza will be on the right (6101 Shelby Oaks Drive). The local phone number (901-388-7050) is the same as before. Members are encouraged to make reservations as soon as possible. Rooms are being held for TOS members until March 30, with the same special rate of \$61.00 per room, plus tax. We consider this rate to be a bargain. However, there are other motels nearby.

Alternate lodging choices at the Sycamore View exit include:

Red Roof Inn - 901-388-6111 or 800-843-7663  
Hampton Inn - 901-388-4881 or 800-426-7866  
Motel 6 - 901-382-8572

All the weekend's indoor events will be held at the Memphis Plaza. There will be a reception with refreshments on Friday evening, April 29, from 5 to 8 p.m. Field trips will depart from the hotel parking lot on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The TOS board meeting will take place Saturday afternoon. The banquet will be at 6:00 Saturday night.

The registration fee for the weekend event will be \$15.00. Cost for the banquet will be \$20.00. All are encouraged to send payment by April 10. Send checks to Carolyn Bullock, MTOS Treasurer, 4746 Cole Road, Memphis, TN 38117. The dinner will consist of grilled chicken. Please notify Carolyn as soon as possible (by April 10) if interested in a vegetarian option.

Our speaker will be well-known birder and author Paul Baicich. A former member of the board of the American Birding Association, Mr. Baicich edited 14 ABA Birding Guides and co-wrote *A Guide to Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds* (1997).

Field trips Saturday will include the best birding locales in Shelby County; namely, Shelby Farms, Shelby Forest, and the Ensley "pits". Expect many shorebirds, including nesting Black-necked Stilts, at Ensley. Shelby Forest should be productive for woodland species, including Mississippi Kites, Fish Crows, and both Cerulean and Swainson's Warblers. Shelby Farms, located very close to the inn, offers varied habitat. Bobolinks and Lincoln's Sparrows are quite likely there. Painted Bunting is possible at both Shelby Farms and at Ensley.

Sunday will provide an opportunity to check these areas again depending on interest and in case of unusual finds. A trip to Hatchie NWR, about an hour's drive northeast of Memphis and just off of I-40, is planned for Sunday, if water levels permit.

Hope to see everyone at Memphis in the spring!  
Rob Peebles - President, Memphis Chapter TOS

## GREENEVILLE CHAPTER TO HOST FALL TOS MEETING

The 2005 TOS fall meeting will be held in Greeneville on September 30, October 1, and October 2. The Comfort Inn at 1790 East Andrew Johnson Highway (Highway 11-E) will be the headquarters for the event. The Comfort Inn is holding a block of rooms for TOS members until September 23, 2005. For reservations at TOS rate, call 423-639-4185. TOS rate is \$65.69 per room; if 10 or more rooms are reserved, the rate drops to \$62.99. TOS rate includes deluxe breakfast. To obtain the special rate, be sure to mention that you are with the TOS group. Reservations may be cancelled anytime up to 6:00 p.m. on September 30.

More complete information about the fall meeting will be presented in the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler*.

### CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA OVERDUE

2004 Christmas Count data is overdue. If you have not sent your 2004 CBC data in, please do so as soon as possible so it can be compiled and sent to the MIGRANT editor. Please remember to include all effort data with your results. These include hours and miles by car, foot, boat or other methods, and owling; number of observers and number of birding parties on count day; feeder information, which includes number of feeder watchers and number of feeder hours; weather conditions for count day; start and end times for the count.

Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN. 37716 or email to [rondolly@esper.com](mailto:rondolly@esper.com).

Thanks for all your efforts.  
Ron Hoff

*What in the World is TOS Doing with My Dues? - Continued from page 1*

**If you tallied these numbers, I hope you are saying “Wait a minute, Mac, you need to learn to count if you’re going to be Treasurer! If we each paid only \$10 or \$12 in state dues in 2004 through our chapter, what supported the remaining difference between the dues structure and almost \$25 per membership in expenses?”** The answer is that earnings from the Life membership endowment and the general investment reserve contributed about \$13 toward each member’s cost of state expenses, thus subsidizing over 50% of the total cost of the organization.

Can we continue to subsidize at this level? Perhaps for a while, but it is already limiting our program reach and will eventually take its toll on our financial soundness. That is why the Finance Committee and I believe that we need a moderate dues increase beginning in 2006 and will so propose in April. It will be our first increase since 1988.

I guess that I would sum up from a personal perspective saying that Susan’s and my dues to both the Memphis Chapter and to the state are by far the most effective we spend each year. Unlike so many other groups, TOS has no overhead and no staff salaries. It provides each member with up-to-date notices about what is happening across our 600 mile-wide state, a chance to participate financially in critical research and conservation initiatives, and a subscription to a first class scientific journal that consolidates the fieldwork data and articles of our dedicated volunteer members.

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## State Wildlife Plan: feedback needed

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency wants your opinion and input. The TWRA and conservation partners are in the process of developing a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. This strategy will direct rare species conservation efforts statewide. To give us your opinion, go to:

<http://www.state.tn.us/nongmain.html>

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## Tennessee Partners in Flight Point Counts

Monitoring Tennessee's birds using point counts on managed areas has provided valuable information about breeding birds and habitats across the state since 1993. Many TOS members across the state participated in the first point counts and many continue to conduct the counts on the same routes. If you would like to participate in point counts this year, or would like to receive information about counts from past years, please contact Michael Roedel, TWRA state ornithologist at [michael.roedel@state.tn.us](mailto:michael.roedel@state.tn.us).

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## CP33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

The USDA Conservation Reserve Program has added a practice to take highly erodible croplands out of production. The CP33 Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds practice promises to benefit songbirds along with the target species - bobwhite quail. Native grass buffers from 30' to 120' are to be planted along the edges of fields. Tennessee could gain as much as 1,000 miles of 75' wide buffer or 9,300 acres. In order to assess the benefits of this new conservation practice State Wildlife agencies are required to monitor songbird response. The TWRA is seeking volunteers to help with this monitoring project. For more information, please contact Mark Gudlin, TWRA Private Lands Liaison at [mark.gudlin@state.tn.us](mailto:mark.gudlin@state.tn.us).

## Important Bird Areas

Tennessee Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is part of an international effort to identify the most critical bird habitat within the state of Tennessee. The goal is by properly managing these critical habitats, bird populations can be stabilized and increased. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) has partnered with the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Area program to compile a list of such sites within Tennessee.

A web site is now available about the Tennessee IBA program and for you to see the status of proposed sites. The web address is <http://bellsouthpwp.net/w/i/windbird/index.htm>. This program needs your site information today! Please visit the webpage or contact Michael Bierly [mlbierly@bellsouth.net](mailto:mlbierly@bellsouth.net) for more information.

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## Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Language in the Omnibus

Working quietly and under the radar, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and their colleagues the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and Ducks Unlimited, language was secured in the huge Omnibus spending bill (passed by Congress in November) which remedies recent federal court decisions which had required the USFWS to protect non-native, invasive and injurious birds, such as Mute Swans, etc, under the MBTA. The legislative remedy defines native species and directs that only those migratory birds that are native are covered under the MBTA, thereby excluding all other non-native species from being covered under the MBTA. The Secretary is directed to publish, within 90 days, a list of all non-native human introduced species to which the MBTA does not apply. This is language with which the USFWS concurred.

TOS wrote a letter in favor of clarifying the language defining native species in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

*The following is a copy of a letter sent to TVA regarding the Chattanooga Chapter's stance on the Shellmounds development*



Chellye Campbell  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
P.O. Box 1010  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

10 December 2004

Dear Dr. Campbell:

I am writing on behalf of the Chattanooga Chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society to express our concern over the proposed development of the Shellmounds Recreational Area and Little Cedar Mountain vicinity. The environmental, cultural, and political damage that would be created by this development would far outweigh any economic benefit that the proposed development might provide. In particular, our organization has the following concerns:

- 1) Loss of riparian habitat-There are numerous studies that demonstrate each acre of riparian habitat supports several times more wildlife than that of similar acreage away from water. In addition, such areas are very important buffers and filters against siltation and other water pollution. Developing the Shellmounds area would result in a significant reduction in water quality and biodiversity.
- 2) Native American historical significance-Little Cedar Mountain is the ancestral home of Dragging Canoe, a Cherokee chief whose efforts to save the land from encroachment and development are well respected by many Cherokee. Proceeding with the proposed development would be an insult to Dragging Canoe's legacy.
- 3) Improper precedent-Following the 1999 environmental review, TVA stated that the land would be best left undeveloped. The proposed development sets a poor example of how TVA views the public lands under its charge. In an official statement issued by TVA, Chairman Craven Crowell commented that the decision not to develop the area "reflects a renewed commitment by the TVA Board to preserve public lands for the maximum benefit of the people who use them". Has this commitment changed, and if so, why? We can see no reason for TVA to alter its position with regards to maintaining public lands for the benefit of everyone.

We hope you find our points persuasive, and will not let this transaction proceed any further. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David A. Aborn, President  
Chattanooga Chapter, Tennessee Ornithological Society

**ATTENTION BIRD LOVERS!**

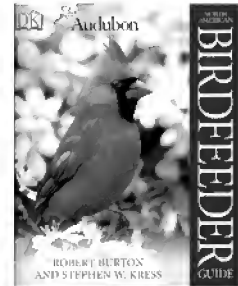
DK Publishing and The National Audubon Society Bring Readers  
A New Book Guaranteed To Attract Many Feathered Friends

One of the greatest pleasures of having even the smallest of gardens is to watch the variety of birds that will visit throughout the year. To assist bird lovers in attracting, feeding, and identifying the birds they see, DK Publishing and the National Audubon Society have teamed up to publish *The North American Birdfeeder Guide* (March 2005; Hardcover; \$25.00). This new book by authors Stephen Kress and Robert Burton (the team behind the 200,000 copy 1995 title, *The North American Birdfeeder Handbook*) includes a foreword by Kenn Kaufman, and is an inspirational and practical guide, to working hand-in-hand with nature to create a bird-friendly environment, whatever the size, style or location of your garden. The basic elements of a good bird garden are examined systematically, from planning your layout and choosing the right plants to selecting the best site for a birdfeeder, bird-bath, or nest-box.

The five color coded sections; "What birds need"; "The bird-friendly garden"; "Observing garden birds"; "Understanding bird behavior"; and "Bird profiles" make information quick and easy to find. "The bird-friendly garden" includes an extensive plant guide for readers to choose which plants and trees attract birds in their parts of the United States. "Observing garden birds" provides useful instruction on all the latest bird watching equipment. Whether you have a garden, backyard, or only a windowsill, the *North American Birdfeeder Guide* is the perfect companion for all enthusiastic home birdwatchers.

**Features:**

- Hundreds of full-color photos.
- The latest equipment and foodstuffs for attracting birds.
- Detailed visual profiles of 100 of our most common garden visitors.
- Illuminating answers to the most frequently asked questions about bird behavior.
- Color coded sections for quick and easy reference.

**About the Authors:**

**Robert Burton** is a well-known wildlife writer who specializes in everyday natural history. His observations on nature have featured regularly in national newspapers and in bird watching and gardening magazines. He is also the author of the *North American Birdfeeder Handbook*, also published by DK.

**Stephen W. Kress, Ph.D.** is a staff biologist for the National Audubon Society and research fellow at Cornell University. With the National Audubon Society, he started Project Puffin to restore seabirds such as Atlantic Puffins and terns to the coast of Maine.

**About the National Audubon Society**

The Audubon mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

**About DK Publishing**

DK Publishing, a Pearson company, is the visionary book publisher renowned for pioneering a distinctive, highly visual style in its books for adults and children. DK has established a worldwide reputation for its innovative nonfiction books in which words and pictures are closely integrated to present information with unrivaled clarity. Visit us on the web at [www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com).

**North American Birdfeeder Guide**

**DK Publishing**

**Authors: Robert Burton and Stephen W. Kress**

**Publication Date: March 2005**

**ISBN: 0-7566-0850-3**

**Price: \$25.00**

**224 Pages, Hardcover**

## CHAPTER NEWS

**GREENEVILLE CHAPTER** Winter brought a number of exciting finds to Greene County.

Highlights of the Greeneville Chapter's Christmas count on December 27 were Snow Goose, Red-shouldered Hawk (3), Eurasian Collared-Dove (3), a *Selasphorus* hummingbird later identified as Rufous Hummingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Thrasher, Chipping Sparrow (65), Fox Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Snow Bunting. The bunting observation is believed to be the first record of this species for Greene County.

Also observed in the period from December 1 to February 28 were Ross's Goose (1-2 birds on January 31 and February 1, 26-27), Rough-legged Hawk (dark-morph bird on February 19), Wild Turkey (high numbers on many dates), American Woodcock (at three sites from January 28 until the end of February), Eurasian Collared-Dove (established at one site; high count of 12 reported on January 2), Barred Owl (February 27), Rufous Hummingbird (through January 17), Common Raven (seen at low elevation on December 26 and January 15), Tree Swallow (55+ on February 26), Palm Warbler (several reports, throughout period), Pine Warbler (observed first on February 12), Common Yellowthroat (at two sites, January 31 and February 26), Fox Sparrow (several reports), Brewer's Blackbird (high counts of 30+ reported on February 1 and 13).

Don Miller

was at Shelby Park/Bottoms and was followed up by a pot-luck supper at a member's home near the park.

The '04 -'05 Owl Invasion in Minnesota was witnessed by a contingent of Nashville birders while a few NTOS'ers made birding treks to Ecuador.

Richard Connors

Members of the **MEMPHIS CHAPTER** are currently constructing a Chimney Swift kiosk tower. The structure, located at Lichterman Nature Center, will memorialize Ben and Lula Coffey, along with the many volunteers who assisted them in banding over 100,000 swifts. This banding effort, spanning more than twenty years, resulted in the discovery of the species' wintering grounds in Peru.

The Memphis Christmas Bird Count, held December 19, tallied 93 species, including a Spotted Sandpiper, 3 Orange-crowned and 3 Palm Warblers. Among sixteen species of waterfowl found were Mute Swan, American Black Duck, Greater Scaups and 2 Surf Scoters, a first for this 77-year count.

We look for many TOS members, hopefully from all chapters, at the state meeting this spring. For details, see page 3.

Rob Peebles

The **NASHVILLE CHAPTER** had a busy and interesting winter season. Our two Christmas counts, the traditional Nashville (west) count on Dec. 16th, and the Old Hickory/ Percy Priest Lakes count on Jan 1st. Count numbers, species and conditions were in the "normal" range. Some Nashville TOS members participated in other area counts such as Reelfoot Lake, Dale Hollow Lake, and DeKalb County.

We enjoyed a variety of programs at our monthly (third Thursday) membership meetings at Radnor Lake Visitor Center. We enjoyed field trips to birding hot spots such as Tennessee NWR and Peabody Reclamation Area, KY. Our annual Woodcock Watch



### *Our Deepest Sympathy*

*To Donna Ward & her family on the death of her mother, Louise Ward -West Tennessee-at-Large member, February, 22 2005*

## CHAPTER NEWS

**KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** - CHAPTER BUSINESS: Chapter By Laws were adopted in November by the membership. Sales of shade-grown coffee have far exceeded expectations and have become a very successful fund-raiser for the Chapter's general fund.

**WINTER MEETING HELD:** In January, a most successful TOS Winter meeting was held at Dayton, and was jointly arranged with other East Tennessee Chapters. David Johnson and Jean Alexander along with Dan and Laurie Mooney worked very hard to assist with the planning and our own President Charlie Muise led a field trip.

**STATE HAPPENINGS:** Ron Hoff of the Knoxville Chapter is working hard at the state level serving as chair of the TOS finance committee.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** to Jim and Stephanie Giocomo on the February 13th birth of their son Lanz James Giocomo (Weight: 7 lbs. 9 oz, Height: 19 in.) Baby's first bird: was a Cedar Waxwing ("the first bird we heard when we were leaving the hospital.") Mom and baby are doing well at home, waiting for dad to finish his PhD during the next month. A double congrats!

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** Knoxville April Dogwood Arts Festival – <http://www.dogwoodarts.com>

The Knoxville Chapter is sponsoring two events in conjunction with this year's Festival. We invite all interested birders to join us from across the state. Friday, April 22 we are hosting Sam and Mary Ann Venable to speak at Ijams Nature Center.

Sam Venable is a well-known regional author and newspaper columnist with the Knoxville News Sentinel and a personal friend of the late J. B. Owen. He is a very avid outdoorsman and humorous speaker. He plans to share stories about the natural history of the area and remembrances of J. B. Owen. His wife, Mary Ann, is a master gardener and will share tips on attracting birds and wildlife to your yard. There will be a silent auction in conjunction with the talk and the proceeds will benefit the J. B. Owen Memorial Fund and Ijams Nature Center.

On Saturday morning, April 23 we will host a public bird walk at Sharps Ridge Memorial Park. The public is invited.

We are planning an out-of-state field trip to Arizona led by David Trently - May 7 – May 15, 2005 details can be found at [http://web.utk.edu/~dtrently/KTOS\\_AZ.html](http://web.utk.edu/~dtrently/KTOS_AZ.html). Any interested birder is welcome to participate.

### RECENT FIELD TRIP REPORT:

Dec 4 – members enjoyed a joint field trip with Chattanooga Chapter to the Hiwassee Refuge for crane viewing and for the Friends of Operation Migration Open House. A picnic with members of the Chattanooga Chapter was quite fun. A good time was had by all. (See related article about the clean up of the Whooping Crane pen at Hiwassee.)

There is a friendly mini-competition within our Chapter (mainly among Blount County residents) to see who can see the most bird species in Blount County during 2005. The highest species count is already over 100 birds. Recent field trips in Blount County included a field trip to Cades Cove and a field trip to Kyker Bottoms to help boost the count and stir the pot!

### RECENT PROGRAMS:

In November Fred J. Alsop III – presented an overview of a project by one of his students. This project was the recent recipient of a grant from the J. B. Owen Memorial Fund and studied the success of Kestrel Nest Boxes on I-181.

## CHAPTER NEWS

### **Knoxville Chapter - Continued**

In December, Melinda Welton, chair of the statewide TOS Conservation Committee, presented "The Challenges of Cerulean Warbler Conservation in East Tennessee"

Our January meeting featured our annual member slide show and travelogue. At the February meeting our own Ron Hoff presented – "Sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand and Australia" – Ron and Dolly Ann have just returned from an ecotour of the islands of the Southern Ocean south of the 50<sup>th</sup> parallel with wonderful pictures and information about sea birds that are indigenous to those remote islands.

**RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Jim Human found a Black Necked Stilt in northwest Blount County. Many chapter members have been able to view this bird. This makes five records in East Tennessee.

**OUTREACH:** Ron Hoff led a bird walk as part of the Pigeon Forge Wilderness Wildlife Week on Jan 15, 2005.

Kathy Bivens

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**STEPHEN M. RUSSELL CHAPTER** - The Bristol Bird Club (BBC) enjoyed another active season. On November 13, 2004, the BBC embarked on a turf and surf field trip beginning at White Top Creek Park, near Bristol Motor Speedway, with a morning field trip lead by BBC President Rack Cross and Steele Creek Park Nature Center Manager Kevin Elam. Field, wetland, and pond habitats were explored and revealed a varied complement of bird species. Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Killdeer topped the list. Following lunch our group headed to the South Holston Lake and set sail from the Painter Creek Boat Dock aboard the "Day Crawler," helmed by Capt. Wallace Coffey. Calling Common Loons, Herring and Bonaparte's Gull, and Horned Grebes were the best finds while afloat.

On December 4, 2004, Wallace Coffey and Larry McDaniel led a group of birders to Cedar Creek Marsh Wetlands area in Bristol, TN. This special area lent close looks at common species. The location was chosen as a birdwalk site after Coffey and McDaniel were asked to represent the BBC in assisting in a private landowner transfer of ownership of the property to the City of Bristol, TN. for use as a wetlands park. The area has produced bird records for over 30 years.

On December 11, 2004, the BBC hosted it's annual Christmas Party held this year at the home of members Bob, Ellen and Charlie Parker in Piney Flats, TN. Special guests included TOS President-elect Danny Gaddy, Ken Dubke, Charlie Muise, and of course, Santa Claus. Nearly 60 birders and friends were present. The following morning birders from East Tennessee bird clubs met with Danny for a roundtable discussion. Local chapters pledged support for one another's upcoming events to include manpower and logistics.

The BBC sponsored three Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in our area including count circles in Bristol, TN/VA, Shady Valley, TN, and Glade Spring, VA. BBC members Richard Lewis, Rob Biller, and Ron Harrington compiled the counts, respectively. BBC broke a long standing regional count record of 89, by logging 91 species on this years count!

On January 8, 2005, the BBC led field trips hosted by Steele Creek Park in Bristol, TN. Rack Cross and Sam Cross a morning bird walk in the highly intensive recreational areas of the park including feeding stations around the Nature Center and shoreline in front of the Beach House Lodge. Sam Cross spoke to the group about his recent White-breasted Nuthatch studies. Highlights included Red-breasted Nuthatch and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Later that evening BBC Vice-president Larry McDaniel returned to the park to lead a very successful Owl Prowl. Larry marched his group across the park's lake impoundment walkway and around the fishing pier into the nearby woods to find, in short order, a couple of cooperative Eastern Screech Owls. Steele Creek Park Nature Center

## CHAPTER NEWS

### **Stephen M. Russell Chapter - Continued**

Manager Kevin Elam was present for each walk and extended much gratitude to the BBC for supplying bird walk leaders in the park.

January 22, 2005, was the date for a field trip led by Larry McDaniel to the Limestone, TN area. Northern Harrier and Loggerhead Shrike were notables.

January 28-30, 2005, marked the Winter Meeting of the TOS held in Dayton, TN. TOS President-elect Danny Gaddy recruited the BBC for being responsible for lining up the field trips for this record breaking event. We complied with Danny's wishes by inviting two of Tennessee's finest field birders. Daniel Moss, a contract biologist for Ft. Campbell Military Installation, and Charlie Muise, a naturalist for Tremont Institute of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These gentlemen answered our call to lead field trips for the weekend. Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge and Yuchi Refuge Waterfowl Project at Smith Bend Wildlife Management Area were our sites of choice and both leaders visited each site with groups of birders. 14 BBC affiliates were on hand for the TOS Winter Meeting.

On February 19, 2005, Orchard Bog of Shady Valley, TN hosted the BBC's annual American Woodcock field trip. Notable birds in the bog this year included our targeted American Woodcock, as well as, Wilson's Snipe, Great Horned Owl, and Virginia Rail.

Upcoming events are scheduled and hold much promise for continued excitement and pleasure.

Rack Cross

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The **John Sellars Chapter –Lebanon** had a meeting in Normandy at the Turrentine home on November 20th, 2004. Four members, Kay & Ralph Brinkhurst and Paul & Pat Wells, previously met at Murfree Springs in Murfreesboro for a little morning birding. This smaller group had a nice list, including a swamp sparrow, belted kingfisher, white-throated sparrows, great blue heron, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker to mention just a few. At the Well's home, many typical feeder birds were seen, including both collared & mourning doves.

While in Normandy, the group ventured over to TWRA's Bedford Lake. Eleven members attended and were greeted with some nice views of ducks. The sightings included Buffleheads, Ringnecks, Hooded Mergansers, a Ruddy Duck, and Mallards (of course!). The group also had Yellow-rumped Warbler, Juncos, Belted Kingfisher, and others.

In December, the group participated on their annual Christmas Bird Count, tallying 67 species. It was noted neither a hermit thrush nor an osprey were sighted. The ice-covered lake at La Guardo contributed to lower number of gulls, too. The Palm Warbler was probably a highlight for most. The group sorely missed Earline Berry's presence after her passing away a few days before. It was decided to continue with plans because we thought Earline would have wanted us to and husband Charles thought we should also continue with our plan.

The Chapter planned an outing to Reelfoot for the weekend of Martin Luther King holiday in 2005. The group had a grand time. Six John Sellars TOS members were in attendance, joined by Memphis Chapter member Theresa Graham for Saturday. The horned larks, kinglets (both ruby-crowned & golden), winter wrens, and swamp sparrow gave us such delightful viewings, it mattered not that the recent floodwaters had our anticipated ducks lower in numbers, along with the eagle numbers being fewer.

We anticipate a program presented by member Paul Wells in March. In April, we plan on participation in the Wildflower Pilgrimage/ Bird Walk at Cedars of Lebanon, Bird Count in May. The group resumes meetings in late summer.

Melissa Turrentine

## **Knoxville CBC hits 100 species!**

The Knoxville Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held on Sunday, 2 January 2005. We had 44 people counting either in the field or in their own backyard. A record 96 species were found on Sunday with four additional species located during the count week (three days before and after count day). That makes a total of 100 species during the count period—a first in the 103-year history of the Knoxville CBC! During that time, there have been 161 species identified on count day and two others that have only been found during the count week.

A videographer with the WBIR TV news team spent part of the day in the field with Dean Edwards and put together a nice story on the count which aired on three news broadcasts Sunday night and Monday morning. The response from the story has been overwhelming and it is clear that it reached a huge audience. KTOS sent a letter of appreciation to the station thanking them for the coverage.

Some of the good birds found on the count include a late Northern Waterthrush (new to the count and the eighth warbler species found during the count history), Merlin, 15 species of waterfowl including a pair of Common Goldeneyes, Sandhill Crane, Horned Lark, Brown-headed Nuthatch, House Wren, Gray Catbird (during count week), Loggerhead Shrike and Lapland Longspur (during count week).

By K. Dean Edwards

## **Muddy Pen Cleaned For Passing Student Cranes**

Last year was the fourth of Operation Migration, a Canadian-based project designed to re-establish an eastern flock of migratory whooping cranes. As of this date, 49 cranes have completed the migration lesson and will routinely make the flights on their own from now on. Last fall 14 juvenile cranes, the "Class of 2004," followed ultra light aircraft from Wisconsin to Florida. The flocks are taught one stopover in East Tennessee: the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge in Meigs County.

Along the way, a lot of volunteers help the effort in a variety of ways. Two years ago there was a problem when one of the "Class of 2002" got its bill stuck in a spent shotgun shell while probing the mud inside the pen at Hiwassee. Since then, KTOS member Vickie

Henderson has recruited volunteers to rake though the mud after the temporary pen is set up.

Last fall's clean up—using rakes, hoes and a metal detector—took place on Sunday, November 14; a good thing since the traveling crane caravan made the risky flight over Walden Ridge and arrived at the site on November 18. Like 2003, the muck-rakers turned up a disgraceful pile of Tennessee Trash: parts of aluminum cans, shards of glass, pieces of plastic and other unnatural detritus. Any one of the items could have caused irreparable harm to one of the priceless birds. Shame on our throwaway society!

- By Lyn Bales

## **Clean up held on Knoxville's Sharp's Ridge**

On Saturday, October 23, 2004 the KTOS unveiled the new "adopt-a-spot" signs on Sharp's Ridge and held a litter pickup-invasive plant removal workday there. Sharp's Ridge is one of the premier birding spots in the Knoxville area. It is also the site of the recently dedicated J B Owen overlook, named after a long-term leader of the Knoxville birding community.

Although the City of Knoxville does not have a formal adopt-a-spot/adopt-a-road beautification program, chapter members have held litter pickups there in the past and wanted more formal recognition of these efforts. Chapter Conservation Chair Mark Campen made this request to city officials and the city accepted the request and provided two signs that were mounted on the ridge.

About a dozen chapter members participated in this litter pickup/invasive plant removal. They filled several bags with trash and removed graffiti from the display at the overlook. They also removed many ailanthus, mimosa, tree-of-heaven and princess trees, as well as lots of privet and bush honeysuckle. Plants were either hand-pulled or, if too big to pull, were cut and then had herbicide painted on the stumps.

Participants included Mark Campen, Allan Muise, Tracey Muise, David Johnson, Carole Gobert, Harold Howell, Deedee Blaine, Carol Lammers, David Trently, Mia Trently and Tony King.

Chapter members will continue these efforts in the future. The next scheduled clean up day is Saturday, March 19.

- By Lyn Bales

## *In Memory of Ruth McMillan*

Ruth McMillan passed away over a year and a half ago & I still miss her presence. This is one of those obits that I neglected to post in the newsletter. It must be noted that the Ruth I birded with and went looking for wildflowers with was gone a few years before the actual date of her passing, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2003, for her last years were unresponsive as she lay in the nursing home.

Ruth was what I term the epitome of a gentle yet firm teacher as she offered guidance in the natural world. I recall one time how someone corrected me on the correct pronunciation of Pileated (I stress the long "i") and she quietly corrected the other, stating both versions are accepted in the dictionary. Once, as we assisted another nearby county on a Christmas Bird Count, I spied a Ruddy Duck on a nearby farm pond. I was very much a novice and this was very exciting. Another party spied it as they traveled in the opposite direction. They too got out, viewing the duck. One of the elderly gentlemen leaned his head in our car window and asked, "Do you want us to put it on our card or are you putting it on yours". Ruth announced we would since "Melissa spotted it first". His face showed disappointment but he agreed. As we continued down the road, she added, "Besides, they were out of their area to count & we were in ours".

Ruth always stressed how important your data was, regardless of how of little importance you felt it was. She was very organized as a President of TOS and took pride in any job she tackled. She also was very realistic and frugal. Ruth appreciated anything just as it was, regardless of how it may look to others. If a passerby saw a junk car, she saw it as a home to a Bewick's wren. If another thought only rock is there, she saw it as a place for the Tennessee Purple Coneflower to grow.

I cannot ever relay the importance she was to me or how much she contributed to TOS. She was too dear to me for words. I do know I can speak for our chapter and for those who knew her, she indeed was a treasure. She was serious in her endeavors in the natural world and loved to venture out to learn. Perhaps we too will never stop enjoying learning, because this is Ruth's story to learn as much as you can be informed, and gently encourage others to become one who appreciates the intricacies of nature.

## *In Memory of Earline Berry*

We are saddened by the passing of our dear friend Earline Berry on Dec 21, 2004. Earline was a long-time TOS member of the John Sellars Chapter and held our treasurer position for years. If a meeting was to be held, Earline would be one of the first to arrive, assuring everything was ready for the group. Of course, in her hands would be a delicious dessert and a lunch for our guest speaker. Earline was not only an enthusiastic person, she also took care of you, like so many of our wonderful folks in the John Sellars TOS. After all, everyone needs "food for the soul" and Earline undertook this as one of her many missions in life. This nurturing personality of Earline's allowed her to "fit right in" amongst the warm group of birders of John Sellars.

If you knew Earline, you knew she loved people and birds. She could give you the detail to the very minute and everything else surrounding the bird, so a lack of brevity was her only weakness! Earline loved to have adventure & didn't hesitate to try new avenues. How many nearly 80 year olds do you know who would travel for an hour and a half in the middle of the night just to watch the meteor shower with friends? She, along with her husband Charles, and daughter Harriett, and friend Kay did... and we all had so much fun. Simply put, she had fun at whatever the circumstance. Her eyes had been failing her for some time but she could hear a pin drop, so we never needed to doubt any neat bird reports she & Charles had. Our future meetings will miss her laughter, stories, and wonderful desserts but most of all, we will miss our wonderful friend. She is survived by Charles, a husband of nearly 60 years, and a daughter, Harriett Jewell. Earline Berry was 80 years old & was from Lebanon TN.

We were privileged to be counted as her friends at John Sellars TOS. Our friendship with Earline will live on as we continue to try to live life as she did- to the fullest, with a sense of humor, and with a good story along the way.

*Both memorials written by  
Melissa Turrentine*



## WHAT TOS DOES FOR ME

Recently there has been some talk about possible dues increases at the state and/or chapter level. Obviously none of us wants to pay more money. Some folks have asked very fair questions about what we do with the money. After giving it some thought, this is the list I came up with, with help from several others. Some of these items cost a lot, some cost nothing because of good volunteers. I would hate to see any of them stop. There are no paid employees of this organization. The hundreds of hours some of us dedicate each year are all for a good cause.

TOS has twelve chapters. Each chapter sends a large portion of the dues it collects to the state organization, keeping some for local activities. For instance, KTOS keeps \$8 of each \$18 individual membership. Most chapters publish a newsletter, which is a better method to inform members about current and local events than the state newsletter. These newsletters (such as *Through the BiKNOXulars* in Knoxville) come out of chapter finances. Some chapters use local funds for social events, conservation endeavors and service awards to members.

The state newsletter *The Tennessee Warbler*, is edited by volunteer Theresa Graham. It is mostly of social interest and helps us keep in touch. Unlike the *Migrant*, it is of interest primarily to current members. It didn't mean much to me the first time I saw it because I didn't know anyone. Now that I've met many members, and learned some TOS history, I'm very interested in it.

*The Migrant*, edited by volunteer Chris Welsh, contains more scholarly work such as detailed compilations of Christmas Bird Counts, Hawk Watches, Spring and Fall Migration Counts, updates on research projects, and unique bird observations. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest-lived periodical of its kind in North America. Many institutions, including some in other countries, subscribe to it.

The state listserv TN-bird is moderated by expert volunteer Wallace Coffee. It is great for up-to-the-minute sightings and updates on various topics.

Thanks to the great efforts of volunteer Webmaster Chuck Nicholson, the TOS website [www.tnbirds.org](http://www.tnbirds.org) was recently voted one of the top bird websites in the United States. Many TOS periodicals are kept here, allowing members who want to, to stop receiving the paper versions. This has saved our chapter some money, and of course is better for the environment.

There are conservation updates on the website, such as our opposition to TVA trading nearly 700 acres of lakefront land to a developer without using a current Environmental Impact Statement. The TOS Conservation committee, along with a few others (including at least 4 people with advanced degrees in biology, or related subjects) wrote 2 letters, passed them back and forth over the course of 4 days, and sent them to several hundred people via both the internet and US mail. Official position statements were made to TVA Directors, and members of the US Legislature.

Another item on the web site is a page regarding the Conservation and Research Funding awards. This year we helped fund a migratory banding station in Cherokee National Forest. We provided the base funding for a brand new MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) banding station at a Knox County wildlife refuge. We assisted in the funding stable isotope feather analysis of American Kestrels, so that a correlation can be made between wintering and breeding grounds.

I invite all of you to look at the Knoxville Chapter's webpage, which can be accessed from [www.tnbirds.org](http://www.tnbirds.org) by clicking on "local chapters." It contains information on the JB Owen Memorial fund. Last year the fund assisted an American Kestrel research project by one of Dr. Fred Alsop's students. From general chapter funds, we helped the Tanasi Council of Girl Scouts develop a fun lesson called "Feathers and Nests."

*Continued on next page*

**What TOS Does For Me - Continued**

For six years in the 1990's TOS conducted a Breeding Bird Atlas. The fieldwork across Tennessee documented over 100,000 observations of breeding activity. The results were compiled in "An Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Tennessee" by Charles P. Nicholson (University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1997).

Other projects we have supported financially and in other ways, include: Operation Migration, an effort to re-establish the eastern migratory flock of critically endangered Whooping Cranes; Yuchi WMA; Sundquist WMA; a state-wide survey of Cerulean Warblers; Educational displays at Ijams Nature Center and the purchase of a parcel of land adjacent to a wildlife refuge along Radnor Lake. TOS members have also conducted 40 or more Breeding Bird Censuses since the establishment of this continental program in 1966. This year TOS awarded nearly \$2500 in research grants.

In May 2003, The Knoxville Chapter was proud to host Dr. Chandler Robbins as the keynote speaker at the annual state meeting. Dr. Robbins has banded over 150,000 birds in his illustrious career, and written literally hundreds of scientific, peer-reviewed papers. In May 2004 the Chattanooga Chapter hosted author Scott Wiedensaul as keynote for this meeting. He is one of the leading environmental advocates (with a scientific mind) of our day. The May, 2005 meeting in Memphis will feature Paul Baicich.

Sincerely,  
Charlie Muise  
President, Knoxville Chapter  
Tennessee Ornithological Society



A big "THANK You" to Mike Roedel and the TOS Bird Records Committee for all the hard work that went into producing the wonderful new Field Cards.

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**REGISTRATION FORM - TOS SPRING MEETING  
APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2005**

**Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOS Chapter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registrations @ \$15 each**

**\$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservations @ \$20 each**

**\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. Make Check payable to Memphis TOS**

**Vegetarian Meal? Yes ☐ No ☐**

**Mail registration form and check to:**

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4746 Cole Road  
Memphis, TN 38117  
[CarolynBullock@aol.com](mailto:CarolynBullock@aol.com)**

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**JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> DEADLINE**

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

**Submit Material To:**

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Copies of *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee* by John C. Robinson are available for \$15.00 by mail or \$10.00 at the state meeting.

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